

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, all the claims pending in the application, stand rejected. Applicant has added new claims 8-11.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 102

Claims 1-3, 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Heldt et al (5,752,737). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner points to structure illustrated in Figs. 2 and 6 of Heltd et al for components that correspond to the claimed door system, including a front door (22) and a rear door (24) that close a continuous opening. A latch mechanism (90), including a striker (92) and latch (94) is noted to be a mechanism for locking the front and rear doors (22, 24) together. An upper latch mechanism (52) as illustrated in Fig. 3 and lower latch mechanism (78) as illustrated in Fig. 5 are also asserted to correspond to limitations of the claims.

The Examiner's analysis fails, however, because it does not consider all of the limitations of the claims. In particular, claim 1 requires a "striker configured to be inserted in both the front door and the rear door when the continuous opening is shut." Moreover, the claim requires that when a door is opened, "the striker is drawn out from one of the front door and the rear door so as to cancel coupling." This structure clearly relates to an actuated structure that is moveable and can be controlled.

Independent claim 5 defines the door system as having a striker that "is configured to be inserted ... when the continuous opening is completely closed." The non-limiting and exemplary embodiment of the present application shows such mechanism in Figs. 1 and 6, where an actuator 50 is operative to move the striker 42 against a spring bias 46 and release the coupling of the front and rear doors, as explained at page 10 and 11 of the present specification.

The disclosure in Heldt et al at col. 4, lines 25-47 of the latching mechanism 90, which is illustrated in Fig, 6, makes no mention of a striker that has a capability of moving, particularly of being drawn out or inserted, as claimed. The striker is disclosed as "having a generally L shape"

and as being connected to a bracket that is “secured by mechanical means” to a beam 34. Nothing in this disclosure teaches or suggests the structure set forth in the claims.

In particular, the cited prior art fails to disclose that the striker is configured to be inserted in both the front door and the rear door when the continuous opening is shut, and is drawn out from one of the front door and rear door so as to cancel coupling. In the absence of such teaching, the claims are patentable.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Spurr (6,752,440). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner asserts that Spurr discloses a door system having a front door (14) and a rear door (16) that close a continuous opening. With reference to Figs. 1 and 1A, the Examiner asserts that Spurr has a “striker (23)” that engages a latch to lock the two doors together.

Here again, the prior art fails to teach the claimed moveable striker having the features of being “inserted” and “drawn out,” and certainly is not slideable. The illustration in the two figures is of a simple static striker, and none of the other Figures even show the striker. The description of the striker at col. 2, lines 31-44 do not even hint at a possible movement of the striker. The striker simply engages a latch, which is not shown.

In sum, the limitations of the claim are not taught by either reference, and the rejection on the basis of anticipation would be overcome. Nothing in the cited art teaches or suggests a moveable striker, and thus, the claims would not be obvious either reference taken alone or in combination.

New Claims

In order to specify a particular movement of the striker, new claims 8-11 have been added.

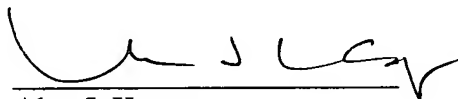
Should you have any additional arguments or amendments to suggest, please advise in your instruction letter. Thank you for your kind cooperation and attention.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 10/820,807

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: June 24, 2005